

REMARKS

In an Office Action dated April 10, 2003, claims 1-22, all of the claims then pending in the above-identified U.S. patent application, were rejected. In view of the above amendments in the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application, and allowance of the presently pending claim.

The rejections of claims 1-17 and 19-22 have been obviated by cancellation of those claims.

Remaining claim 18 was rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Geistlich et al. US Patent No. 5,837,278 (Geistlich '278) in view of Shimizu U.S. Patent No. 6,090,117, and further in view of the abstracts of Hentz et al. and Rosen et al., and further in view of Stensaas et al. US Patent No. 4,778,467. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As acknowledged in the Office Action, none of Geistlich '278, Shimizu, Hentz et al. or Rosen et al. teach methods of forming tubes from collagen sheets.

Stensaas et al. discloses formation of a nerve prosthesis made of a resilient material "impermeable to fluids associated with nerve tissue." (Column 7, lines 26-28). Such materials do not include the collagen material required by claim 18 of the present application.

In fact, the materials utilized by Stensaas et al. are silicone rubber, polyurethane, teflon, and nitrocellulose (column 7, lines 37-39), since Stensaas et al. specifically states that "it is very important that nerve prosthesis 10 be fabricated of a material which is substantially impermeable to fluids associated with nerve tissue." (Column 7, lines 52-55).

Since Stensaas et al. only utilizes synthetic, fluid-impermeable materials, persons of ordinary skill in the art would not consider utilizing the teachings of Stensaas et al. in a method of producing a nerve regeneration tube using a sheet of collagen material.

In view of the above remarks, it is respectfully submitted that claim 18 is non-obvious in view of the applied art. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claim 18 is respectfully requested.

Appln. No. 09/885,537
Amendment dated August 11, 2003
Reply to Office Action of April 10, 2003

Applicants submit that the present application is now in condition for allowance.
Reconsideration and favorable action are earnestly requested.

Respectfully submitted,

By _____


George R. Repper
Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 31,414
ROTHWELL, FIGG, ERNST & MANBECK, P.C.
Suite 800, 1425 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202)783-6040

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